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New Bernal Journal

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SERVING THE BERNAL HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD OF SAN FRANCISCO SINCE 1964

¡Sección Especial! NBJ en Español: Página 9

BHNC Opens 2004 Membership Drive, Sets Goal of 1,300 Members!

By Jack Chalmers

The BHNC Membership Drive of 2003 was a rousing show of support from the community. At the end of the year, we had 1,121 members, up 38 percent from 810 in 2002, more than doubling membership in the past three years and exceeding our 2003 goal of 1,000 members by 12 percent.

Our hopes are high for this April through June's drive, as is our goal of 1,300 total members by December, an increase of 16 percent over last year. With Youth and Senior Departments reaching out to more and more people who need their services, Community Organizing continuing its outreach to build and maintain a healthy community through resident action and organizing around collective community vision, and the Affordable Housing department breaking ground on

another 37 new apartments for low-income seniors at 5199 Mission, we ask the community to join us and help us continue this work in the place we all live.

As a neighborhood-based nonprofit, the BHNC is its membership. In addition to being an important part of the center's funding, members act as event and service volunteers and vote for the BHNC Board (which is also made up of members); they are the center's clients, and they ultimately provide neighborhood grounding through drop-in visits, phone calls, and letters that let staff know if they're on the right — or wrong — track. Members are really the investors who understand the value of BHNC services in the community.

In addition to providing guidance to the center and the good feeling of supporting BHNC's essential services to seniors, youth, and lower-income residents

throughout Bernal and in nearby communities, benefits of membership include

- Discounts on BHNC room rentals
- Member rates on senior activities, including Reno trips, outings, and special events
- Acknowledgment in BHNC's Annual Report and the *New Bernal Journal*.

For many residents and workers in Bernal Heights, the most important part of BHNC membership is voting privileges for the center's Community Congress, scheduled this year for Saturday, June 12. "Through the congress, the members actually guide us and give us direction," explains Ron Morgan, community organizing coordinator at BHNC. "Members are the leaders. We can feel

strong in our efforts when we know that neighbors support them."

Last year's Congress addressed issues around the city budget, Home Depot, the BHNC planning process for the South of Chavez Mission Street corridor, and the planning of the 25th Anniversary celebration and the 15th Annual Fiesta on the Hill street fair. This year is likely to be at least as varied. A number of seats on the board of directors will also be up for election, and committees will be open for new participants.

So help us to grow. Join now and become the first person on your block to become a 2004 member of the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center. It's your center ... and it's your home. ■

To renew your membership in the BHNC, or to become a new member, see the form on page 8.

Home Depot Heating Up, Again

"No Big Box" Revival Comes to Town

By Ron Morgan

New York performance artist Bill "Reverend Billy" Talen will bring his 22-member No Big Box Gospel Choir to the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center on Friday, April 23 at 6 p.m. as part of a weeklong tour of California cities. Reverend Billy, a former Bernal resident, asked to perform in support of the No Depot Committee's three-year effort to keep Home Depot from erecting a 300,000-square-foot development on Bayshore Boulevard at the foot of Cortland Avenue. The event is described as "A Neighborhood Revival and Exorcism of Development Dread," and will include song, performance, and refreshments.

Talen says that the intention of this tour is to bring hope to those who are "resisting the invasion of supercenters now ongoing on the West Coast. The border between transnational capital and healthy living places has never been clearer, and we believe that anything that can be done to dramatize the California

struggle helps people everywhere."

Reverend Billy may be familiar as a voice on National Public Radio, through appearances on Free Speech TV, and as the subject of feature articles in the *Utne Reader* and the *Village Voice*. Bill Talen created the character of Reverend Billy as a reaction to the gentrification of his Hell's Kitchen neighborhood and the redevelopment of Times Square. His support of neighborhoods against the consumer culture of convenience eventually led him from preaching alternative street sermons on 42nd Street to organizing political performances inside the Disney Store and Starbucks. An internal memo from Starbucks corporate headquarters entitled "What Should I Do If Reverend Billy Is In My Store?" inspired Talen to use the memo's subject line as the title of his book on the origins and ideas behind Reverend Billy. For more information, visit www.revilly.com.

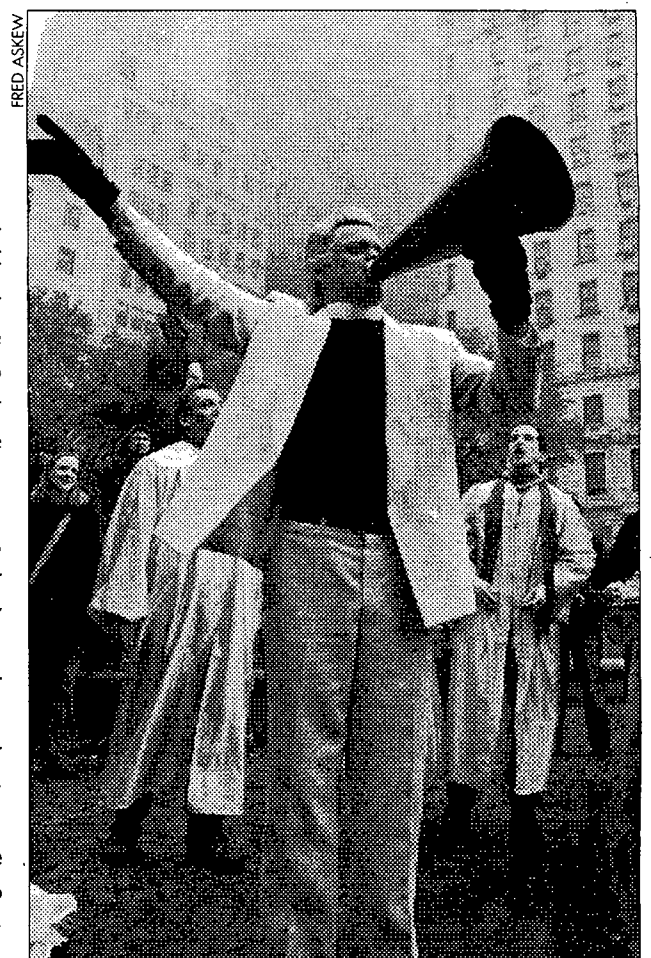
Depot Update

It has been three years since Home

Depot, Inc. initially applied for environmental review to build a gigantic development on Bayshore. Most of this time has been spent waiting for Home Depot's consultants to produce documents for review, leading some experts in San Francisco land-use battles to observe that this is one of the longest environmental review processes they can remember for a project of this type and size.

But even a glacier has a terminus, ribboning slowly into the sea. So it is with Home Depot, which looks to be headed for a hearing at the Planning Commission on the certification of its Final Environmental Impact Report as early as May.

It's a good time to get together: See you on April 23!



Reverend Billy preaches the gospel against big box stores with his 22-piece choir.

The New Bernal Journal

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The New Bernal Journal
is a neighborhood newspaper
sponsored by the
Bernal Heights
Neighborhood Center.
It is dedicated to providing the
people of Bernal Heights with their
community's news, ideas, issues,
and events which support the
center's mission:

To preserve and enhance the ethnic,
cultural, and economic diversity and
well-being of the Bernal Heights com-
munity. We work to build a strong
community for all, with a focus on
the needs of low- and moderate-
income people. We do this by
providing services to support and
increase opportunities for seniors,
youth, and others most at-risk; by
preserving and expanding access to
affordable housing; and by building
the neighborhood's power and
capacity to achieve these goals. We
commit to being a provider of essen-
tial services, a builder of community,
and a force for organizing
neighborhood change.

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of the NBJ are due by 05/14/04.

Please make all computer disk
submissions in PC format, or e-mail
them to nbj@bhnc.org



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Members:

I hope this letter finds you well and in good spirits as spring sets in upon us. It's membership time here at the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center. We had a very successful campaign in 2003, ending up with 1,121 members. I hope I can count on your support once again as we commence our 2004 drive with an ultimate goal of 1,300 members. Please consider increasing your contribution if you can. Your participation is crucial to our success.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 12, which is our annual Community Congress where we will elect five BHNC board members and hopefully interact with new San Francisco's Mayor Gavin Newsom. Our Major Donor Thank You event is scheduled for Wednesday, April 21. Please call me for more information.

April is our third anniversary of fighting Home Depot's proposed location at Cortland and Bayshore. I hope you can join us on Friday, April 23 to kick off our third and final year of fighting Home Depot and the preservation of a great Bernal neighborhood.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest employees. Zebunissa Bradley is our Youth Case Management Coordinator; Joseph Colmenares is our Waterfront Youth and Bernal Gateway Children's Center Coordinator; and Xiao Sharon Hong is our new Excelsior Nest Senior Services Case Manager. I also want to welcome Vicky Walker, our new editor of the New Bernal Journal. We anticipate enhanced performance in all the areas these new employees will contribute to.

Our work in the Excelsior continues to progress. Our senior affordable housing development at 5199 Mission Street is under construction. We held our first Excelsior Merchants meeting on Monday, March 29 with good participation, and our MOCD proposal to renovate the Woolworth building at Harrington & Mission streets has been recommended for funding. We now have a hearing on Wednesday, April 7, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall before the Mayor's Citizens Committee. We hope you will be able to join us to emphasize the need for a multipurpose center in the Excelsior similar to the BHNC in Bernal. The center will provide a voice, service location, and commercial use for an array of services from "cradle to grave."

We also received a mini-grant for the period of March 8 to June 30 from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice to organize around public safety in the Alemany Public Housing Development as well as four Mission Street intersections in the Excelsior. If you would like to get involved, please contact Project Manager Anna Ulbrich.

In closing, as April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the BHNC volunteers who have made our progress in our community development work a success. We could not do the work we do without their support. I especially want to thank Tony Fazio of Winning Directions for his support of the BHNC in producing our brochure for the sixth straight year. We could not inform the public of our great work without his company's contribution. Our Volunteer Thank You event is scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, at 5:30 p.m. at the center. I hope all of our volunteers can join us so that we can express our thanks.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the NBJ and renew your membership or become a new member of the center. As always, feel free to drop in or call if you would like to discuss an issue and solicit our support. You can reach me at 206-2140 ext. 121. Our success depends on our partnership!

Sincerely yours,

Mauricio E. Vela, BHNC Executive Director



Xiao (Sharon) Hong



Zebunissa Bradley



Joseph Colmenares

Like what you see in the
NBJ? Want to help your
neighbors see it too?

Become a Volunteer Distributor!

The New Bernal Journal is delivered free to the doors of almost every home in Bernal. We rely on our generous volunteers to make sure that it reaches the houses of our neighbors, particularly our seniors who may not make it down to the stores where the NBJ is also available. Please help make a difference and volunteer to distribute around your area today. Even one block helps tremendously!

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Bernal Neighbors Join Democratic County Central Committee and the SFUSD School Board

By Vicky Walker

Bernal resident and Deputy City Attorney **David Campos** was elected to the Democratic Party County Central Committee, representing Assembly District 13, on March 2. He was endorsed by Supervisor Tom Ammiano, District Attorney Kamala Harris, and Assemblyman Mark Leno, but insists he is a progressive Democrat and is not concerned about being seen as part of SF machine politics. "My support comes from all over the spectrum," he says, "which speaks to the kind of person I am, who has strong convictions and is able to work with different people." He has nothing but praise for Supervisor Ammiano: "Tom is the architect of everything that's right with Bernal Heights," he says. "He's a hero to all of us."

David's legal background — he was lead counsel for the City of San Francisco's litigation against PG&E and has served as in-house counsel for the SF Unified School District — should serve him in good stead for his work on the committee, which serves as a steering group for state and national Democratic Party platforms and focuses on registering and turning out Democratic voters.

He firmly believes in expanding community outreach, and hopes to set up regular meetings in Bernal so



David Campos

residents can get more involved with the committee, and to work more closely with the Bernal Heights Democratic Club. "As a Bernal Heights resident, I have a bias — I feel it's the best place you can possibly live," he says. "It's an amazing neighborhood. I love its diversity, that people are very involved and care about the community."

The committee's first official meeting will be on April 1, when members have to choose a new chairperson. David hopes to get more residents registered to vote in time for the November election: "I really believe the Democratic Party needs to get more minorities involved in politics. We want to make sure everyone who is eligible votes. It's the year to be involved."

For more information, e-mail davidfcampos@yahoo.com.

Bernal community activist **Heather Hiles** was appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom to the SFUSD Board of Education in January, and has hit the ground running. She has interviewed all the department heads in the administration to figure out the machinations of the school district. She is touring local schools in her capacity as chair of the Curriculum Committee, and has used her background as a philanthropy consultant to raise money for the board's "dream schools" plan, which aims to radically overhaul underperforming schools by increasing parental and community involvement. "If you take any school and have more focused resources, the ability to hire teachers who are highly motivated to turn a school around, you will bring in supports that you know kids can be more successful academically," she says.

Heather, who wrote Gavin Newsom's campaign policy paper on education, campaigned strongly for Proposition H and is delighted that it passed with such a large majority. "Absolutely, the city has to be on the hook for providing services for kids," she says.

Heather also hopes to improve the focus in board meetings so that more

time is spent talking about the issues. "I actually want to ask for our meetings to be televised," she says. "If people watch what we do, then we're more accountable." She points out that parents often don't have time to attend meetings, but might become more involved if they see the proceedings on TV. "We need to expend our skills and our talents to improve the talents of our schoolchildren."

Heather welcomes enquiries from Bernal residents and parents. "I want to be held accountable and get work done fighting for our kids and our public schools," she stresses. She can be contacted by phone at the School Board office at 241-6493 or by e-mail at hiles@sfusd.edu. ■



Heather Hiles

BHNC, Senior Action Network, Board of Supervisors Team Up to Restore Food to Seniors

By Karen Garrison

On March 4, the Board of Supervisors voted 9 to 0 on a resolution urging the Economic Opportunity Council of San Francisco (EOC) to "immediately restore the supplemental nutrition distribution system sites to serve the needs of San Francisco seniors."

The EOC has been administering the senior supplemental nutrition program (EOC food box) to low-income SF seniors for more than ten years. Seniors with an income of less than \$973 per month are eligible. The box contains shelf staples such as rice, pasta, canned juices, vegetables, meats, and cheese. These items were distributed monthly through six public sites as well as 86 community sites including senior centers, supportive housing, and Housing Authority buildings. These basic items greatly help to stretch a senior's tight food budget, especially as the month comes to an end.

Prior to October 2003, the EOC distributed more than **11,000** food boxes per month to SF seniors. In mid-2003, the Department of Education, which monitors the EOC, found "long-standing problems with their tracking of food, storing of food, and record-keeping in general" and informed the

EOC that if these problem areas were not corrected within thirty days, the entire program would be eliminated. In October 2003, the EOC reduced its community sites to just fourteen.

The BHNC was one of the community sites that distributed a hundred food boxes a month, with twenty boxes hand-delivered by BHNC volunteers directly to our homebound seniors. The box typically weighs 35 to 40 pounds, so many seniors have great difficulty handling and transporting them. Because of EOC's new "proxy system," BHNC's volunteers are now no longer able to deliver boxes to our frailest seniors. In the past, they were able to get their boxes if they lived close to their local senior center, or housing staff could deliver their boxes directly to their homes.

At present, **7,000 to 8,000** eligible seniors are receiving boxes monthly. Literally thousands of seniors have lost the opportunity to receive vital food that would enable them to remain healthy and strong, and the most frail and homebound have been hardest hit by this new system.

After reaching out to other former sites, BHNC partnered with Senior

Action Network and Supervisor Chris Daly to draft a resolution to restore all of the food box sites. The matter was heard before the City Services Committee on February 26. The hearing room was packed with seniors and service providers from throughout San Francisco. The testimony began unofficially when one monolingual Chinese senior leapt to her feet to tell her story of how difficult it was to drag a box on MUNI to get it home. Bernal senior Georgia Willet spoke about how difficult it has been for seniors at Alemany to receive their boxes as fifteen BHNC seniors and staff listened.

As part of the board resolution, a working group was formed to plan how community sites could be restored. This plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors within sixty days. The first working group was convened on Friday, March 19 with members of the Controller's Office, EOC, the BHNC, Senior Action Network, and other service providers. It was a preliminary meeting in which EOC compliance and governance issues were discussed. More meetings are planned for April to address what Supervisor Bevan Duffy, chair of the City Services

Committee, described as "this crisis situation for seniors."

Four Ways to Support Seniors

- Volunteer. Whether you can drive seniors to the doctor, become a friendly visitor, deliver food to a homebound senior, or run an activity group at our senior center, there are many ways you can help. Contact Suzanne at 206-2140 ex.132.

- Do you know a senior living in Bernal, the Excelsior, or surrounding areas in need of case management or social services? We offer FREE services to seniors and adults with disabilities. Contact Karen at 206-2140 ex.131.

- Become a member of the BHNC or make a donation.

- Shop at or donate items to Gifts on the Hill, our volunteer-run thrift store at 513 Cortland Avenue. All proceeds go directly to Senior Services at the BHNC. Please bring clean usable items to the store on Mondays or Saturdays during store hours only. All donations are tax-deductible. Store hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. every day. ■

Cortland Avenue Happenings

Library News

By Lisa Dunseth

Our Celebrate Children's Books program, supported by the Gabriel Sharing Fund, was a lively success. Ashley Wolff, Jane Wattenberg, and Remy Charlip (all Bernal Heights residents) showed slides, told stories, and even brought chickens.

We had a great deal of fun at the Celebrate Irish Culture program on March 27; many thanks to the Irish Arts Foundation for their support.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Poetry Reading by the young students of Grace Grafton on Tuesday, April 20, 7 p.m.

Happy 125th Birthday to SFPL!

Join us on Saturday, June 5 at 2:00 p.m. for "Discovering the History of Bernal Heights: A Community Dialogue" with Peter Wiley. Bring your photos, scrapbooks, stories, and curiosity. Neew local history group Bernal Heights Preservation will be scheduling oral history appointments during the program. (For more information about BHP, call 824-2659.)

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Sophie's Craft Hour on Wednesday, April 14 and Wednesday, May 12, 4 p.m.

The Juggling Tornado on Thursday, April 1, 11:00 a.m.

P&T Puppets: Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*, Wednesday, April 7, at 4 p.m.

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with Cascada de Flores on Wednesday, May 5 at 4 p.m.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Origami Club will return on Saturdays April 3 and May 1 at 2:00 p.m.

The Book Club will meet on Thursday, April 29 to discuss *The Price of a Child* by Lorene Cary and on Thursday, May 27 to discuss Seamus Heaney's new translation of *Beowulf*.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Carol: *Elizabeth* (the movie).

Hannah: *Biêt Ly Bi, Chào Mi* by Quynh Dao and Heather Graham's *Picture Me Dead*.

Kristie: *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri.

Lisa: *Swimming to Antarctica* by Lynne Cox and *I Sailed with Magellan* by Stuart Dybeck.

Skye: *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown.

Sylvie: *From the Land of Green Ghosts* by Pascal Khoo Thwe and *Leaving* by Richard Dry.

All programs at the library are free and sponsored by the Friends and Foundation.

The library is located at 500 Cortland Avenue. Call 355-2810 for more information.

Holly Park Update

By Eugenie Marek

On February 23, South Bernal residents attended a community meeting called by the SF Recreation & Park Department to discuss a petition proposing that the Holly Park ballfield be changed into an area for off-leash dogs. The field, about one acre atop of the park, has long been a topic of controversy. It has been locked for several years because of turf damage, mostly from dog usage. There were no staff available to open the field, so there was little recreation of any kind.

Approximately 250 people attended the meeting, filling the entire gym at the Bernal Heights Recreation Center. People were courteous to each speaker, even though feelings are strong and opinions divided. The overwhelming sense of the comments was to preserve the field for children's recreation, while chiding SF Rec & Park about maintaining the field for safe play.

Many speakers also commented on related topics, such as the nearby dog play areas on Bernal Hill and at St Mary's Park, off-leash dogs in Holly Park, and the value of dogs to Holly Park users. Some felt that this was a first step towards serious consideration of a dog play area in Holly Park.

Junipero Serra School on Holly Park Circle sent representatives with letters and a large banner prepared by stu-

dents. Principal Eva Cheung obtained a permit last fall for a school/park relationship, upon completion of park renovation, which would allow students supervised recreation in the park, including the ballfield. Junipero Serra Annex, for pre- and after-school children, also sent letters asking to deny the petition.

The results of this meeting were brought before the March 9 SF Rec & Park Dog Advisory Committee, which voted unanimously to support Superintendent Dan McKenna's recommendation to deny the petition to change the ballfield. He is looking into turf renovation. Another proposal in petition form could be submitted for evaluation by the department. Superintendent McKenna suggested community process prior to such a proposal.

Meanwhile, despite winter rain and mud, A. Ruiz Construction still aims for a June completion of the \$2 million capital renovation project. The foundation and pathway work is still under way. The playground, structure, barbecue features, landscaping, and smaller additions such as benches and a community bulletin board will be installed closer to project completion. Certain areas of the park will remain closed until then.

Questions related to the project can be directed to Sheri Costa, SF Department of Public Works, at 437-7009.

Friends of Holly Park
hollyparkfriends@yahoo.com



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Flooded, But Not Defeated

The Family School continues its fight to serve families.

By Ron Morgan

Janetta Nartey, executive director of the Family School in the first floor of Bernal Gateway Apartments, was away from her office on the morning of February 25, cautiously driving through an unusually heavy rainstorm on her way to a meeting, when she got the phone call. A staff member told her she needed to get back to the school right away. A three-foot wave of runoff rainwater and sewage had come cascading eastward down Cesar Chavez to Mission Street and had burst through the front door of the Family School, flooding its offices and adjacent daycare facility. Janetta thought to herself, not again!

For the second time in two months the school was closed because of flooding. On December 15, a blocked storm drain combined with a sustained overnight storm to create a roving pool of water several inches deep that seeped through the first floor of the Bernal Gateway building, soaking carpets and completely ruining the floor of the daycare room. The Family School had just finished water damage repairs and was planning to reopen its daycare program the Monday following the second flood.

Janetta describes the effect of the floods as devastating. "Our clients are extremely fragile," she says. "Many of them have just begun jobs and are without other resources. A sudden loss of childcare forces them to make the choice between going to work and taking care of their infant."

The conference room at the Family School has a raw feeling, like a wound. The carpeting has been stripped to reveal concrete ribboned with the stains of dried adhesive. The walls are scarred with dozens of holes from which long clear plastic tubes trail to huge dehumidifiers, resembling IV units in a hospital for ailing buildings. Computer towers that had been soaked by the flood sit atop tables, their covers removed by staff members who hope to salvage some of them. Janetta sits calmly in her temporarily devastated school and describes their rebuilding needs.

"We will be reopen very soon, and we are continuing to serve and sign up clients for our programs," she says. "The Family School welcomes everyone in the Bernal community to drop by and see what we offer. We welcome volunteers in all capacities; seniors can come by and give the babies a hug. The Family School especially needs donations to help close a \$60,000 budget deficit due to the flood. Donations may be sent to the Family School, 548 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94117, and are greatly appreciated."

Janetta, who arrived in San Francisco six months ago to take the job of director at the school, remains optimistic despite all the recent setbacks. The Family School currently serves Bernal youth through its Youth Development Services and adults through the STRIVE Employment Training Program, and has 32 children aged 0-5 years in its daycare program, with room in all of their

programs for many more families. "I can't wait to reopen," she says. "The needs of our families haven't gone away, and neither have we." ■

The Family School
3201 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
550-0425

The Family School is a community based nonprofit started in 1986 by Sister Catherine De Back, a Dominican Sister, to help families and their children move from welfare dependence to financial self-reliance. The Family School provides education and training, teaches work-readiness skills, and offers employment and family support services through the following programs:

● **STRIVE Employment Training:**

Using the nationally recognized STRIVE system, the Family School trains and places program graduates into jobs that offer opportunities for advancement. After placement, trained counselors offer two years of follow-up support.

● **"Our Fathers Being Responsible":**

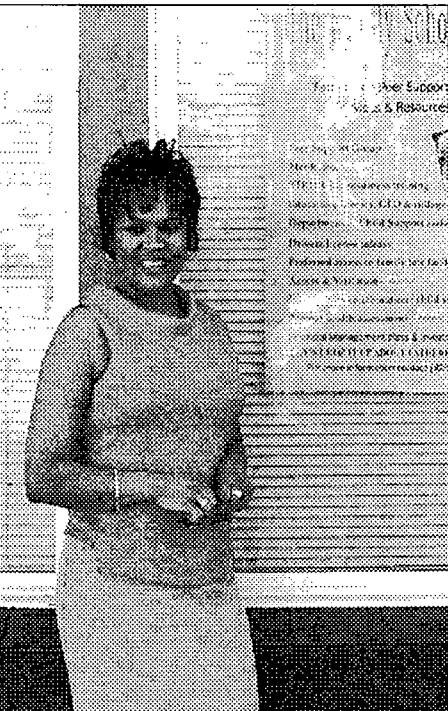
This program is designed to help custodial and noncustodial fathers meet the challenges and overcome the obstacles that might prevent them from participating in their children's lives, offering training in life skills, parenting, and responsibility, and referrals to the STRIVE program.

● **Youth Development Program:**

Educational services for youth, ages 18-21, that lead to either employment or a continuing of their education. Activities include Peer Mentoring, Life Skills Training, Individual Tutoring, Secondary School, Reading/Math Remediation, GED prep, and STRIVE.

● **Child Development Center:**

The Family School is committed to meeting the needs of families who cannot afford to pay the high cost of childcare. Two licensed child development centers provide an on-site resource for STRIVE and youth program participants during training and after they become employed.



Janetta of the Family School remains optimistic despite two recent floods.

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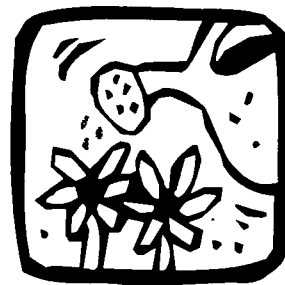
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- Dispose of leftover products properly (by taking to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center at 501 Tunnel Road near 3 Com Park).

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Generation Solar: Sunlight to Power Your Home

By Supervisor Tom Ammiano, District #9

San Francisco is poised to be the nation's leader in solar power. First, voters approved bond measures to fund renewable energy development, and then we put a solar array on top of Moscone Convention Center that could power two hundred homes. Now we're ready to bring solar power directly to San Francisco residents and businesses.

Our Generation Solar program, which is being developed following an ordinance I authored and the Board of Supervisors adopted, has a goal for the year to install solar on one hundred homes and commercial buildings. But that's just the beginning. With the support of homeowners in all our neighborhoods — particularly in Bernal Heights, the Mission, and Portola (where there's plenty of sun) — there's no reason we can't have ten thousand solar roofs in San Francisco.

There are many environmental reasons to promote pollution-free solar power, from cleaner air to improved public health. There are real financial benefits as well.

Homes fitted with solar power tend to sell faster. Some

real-estate specialists argue that every dollar spent on solar power adds \$21 to your property value. You become energy-independent and are also buffered from future rate increases.

The state will cover 30 to 50 percent of your installation costs, contributing on average three dollars per watt of power your system generates. Instead of paying a monthly electricity bill, you'll pay about the same amount against the cost of your solar installation. Every home is a little different, but in general it takes six years to pay off a commercial system, and nine to twelve years for a home. These systems are designed to last for 25 years — so that means up to nineteen years of free energy!

Energy specialists from Generation Solar will look at your electricity usage over a calendar year and design the right-sized system for your roof and your family. A properly sized system can meet 100 percent of your electricity needs. Most systems are between 1.5 and 3 kilowatts, which cover 185 to 370 square feet. Shade-free, south-facing roofs are best, but east- and west-pitched roofs can also work well.

With roof solar panels your utility meter actually will spin backward on sunny days when you are making energy and sending it onto the grid. A new kind of electricity meter will

track the amount of energy you've banked, so on rainy days you'll use that energy first. And because your system is connected to the grid, you'll always have power even if your system is not generating.

Generation Solar will further reduce costs by purchasing solar panels in bulk, arranging for low-cost financing, applying for state subsidies (including federal tax credits for commercial installations), and providing energy-efficiency suggestions. We intend to streamline permitting and inspection fees to save you money there as well. No City General Funds will go to subsidize the program.

We are lining up installers, designers, distributors, and manufacturers. We're talking to private lenders and banks to negotiate the best interest rates and payment plans, and hope to start interviewing homeowners and conducting roof inspections in May. Installations may begin as early as June, and we'd like to have the first hundred completed by Thanksgiving.

More than one hundred property owners have already registered for Generation Solar — and you can, too! Just call the Department of the Environment's program information line at 415-355-3715 or register online at www.SolarSF.org. ■

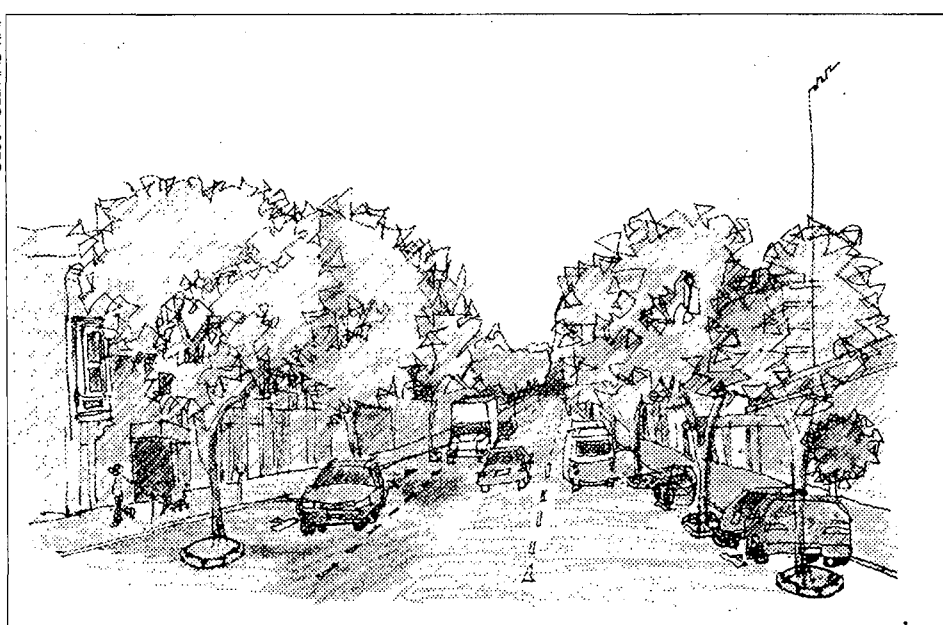
South of Chavez to Randall Mission Street Community Planning Forges Ahead

By Mary C. Lucero-Dorst

Bernal Heights residents and merchants continue to work together to craft a vision for the future of Mission Street in Bernal Heights between César Chavez and Randall. BHNC's efforts to facilitate a community process to help guide the shape of future development have been funded by the Surdna Foundation. So far this year we have concluded a two-part presentation about Affordable Housing — what it is, who it serves, how it is funded, built, and managed — and resumed the Planning Workshops in February and March. In February, participants expressed their support for improving the streetscape with a reconfigured traffic and transit flow on Mission that may include a second row of street trees to help shape parking bays. Bicyclists also worked with staff and our architectural consultant to propose alternate routes to get bikes off Mission Street

while improving bike traffic flow to the north and south of the corridor.

The March 18 workshop participants reviewed what the current zoning, NC-3, actually means and how it can shape future development. We considered how an addition of five feet of height in an area with forty-foot height limits could improve the look and feel of ground-floor retail space for both businesses and pedestrians, without increasing density. The extra height can create better spaces for retail, while not allowing enough new height for an additional floor beyond what NC-3 currently permits. We also discussed intersection improvements, including adding bulb-outs at key streets and opposite bus bulbs to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. Another idea is to raise intersections up to curb level so curb cuts for persons in wheelchairs and pedestrians are not necessary. This enhances pedestrian safety by focusing drivers' attention on crosswalks.



Residents also discussed ways to express neighborhood identity on the Mission Street corridor. Some suggested talking with seniors, whose families may have lived in Bernal Heights for generations, to elicit ideas for visual cues to incorporate neighborhood history and character into the design of streetscape improvements. Architect Lisa Gelfand suggested using nonuniform paving designs and tiles as one element to brighten sidewalks, yet avoid a maintenance problem like the Mission District has, where missing red and blue decorative sidewalk tiles glaringly reveal deterioration and inadequate maintenance. Perhaps the community could preselect several tile options for

developers to choose from and incorporate into their projects along the corridor. She showed a streetlight design that includes spaces for tiles, and lights that project directly onto sidewalks without blocking store signs.

Visit our Web site at www.bhnc.org and click the pop-up for South of Chavez Mission Street Community Planning to learn more. Please join us on Thursday, April 29, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., for the next workshop at Coleridge Park Homes, 190 Coleridge, as we discuss some of the major underdeveloped sites along Mission Street between César Chavez and Randall. Spanish translation, childcare, and refreshments will be provided. ■

Do you have a leak in your roof?

Do you need new stairs or a new roof?

Do you have other deferred repairs on your house?

Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center can help you to apply for low-interest loans sponsored by the City of San Francisco for low-income homeowners to help them bring their homes up to code. **The Community Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program**

(CHRP) can lend qualified homeowners **up to \$75,000 for only 3% interest** and with a long-term **deferred repayment** option.

Many Bernal and Excelsior neighbors have taken advantage of this unique homeowner loan from the city to bring their homes up to code and to improve their lives.

To see if you qualify and to find out more, please call Ivana Vesela at BHNC at 206-2140 ext. 176.



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Bernal Happenings

A Message from New Ingleside Police District Captain Paul Chignell

Greetings from Ingleside Police Station. I am the new captain at the Ingleside, having started at the end of February. This has been a busy time meeting with numerous community leaders and getting to know the district.

My career in the San Francisco Police Department has taken me to various police stations and duties over the past 34 years. I have worked as a patrol officer, sergeant, inspector, lieutenant, and now captain. The various postings have been at Taraval Station, Southern Station, Northern Station, Tenderloin Station, the Narcotics Bureau, the Hall of Justice, and four years in the mayor's office working for former Mayor Art Agnos.

In addition to police work I have been president of the San Francisco Police Officers' Association, served on the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and been mayor of the town of San Anselmo.

My most memorable time in the Police Department has been working in San Francisco neighborhoods with community organizations. My favorite time was as a lieutenant in the Tenderloin, where we were confronted with many crime issues and had to implement creative strategies to stop street prostitution, abate open-air drug dealing, and stem the violence of shootings over drug turf. The Tenderloin is a wonderful community of various ethnic groups, a multitude of children, and home to many San Francisco seniors. The plethora of community organizations were highly supportive of the neighborhood policing strategies that I was proud to embrace.

The Ingleside District is an exciting place to work. In the first two weeks I have met numerous people who want to make their neighborhood a safe place to live and work, who embrace diversity and want to help people in need.

You can phone me at 404-4030 or e-mail me at Paul_Chignell@ci.sf.ca.us.

I look forward to meeting residents at our next Police Community Relations meeting on April 20 and collaborating with all of you on community issues.

Bernal Heights Group Hits the Ground Running

Bernal Heights Preservation, the newly formed neighborhood history group, has been meeting for the last couple of months in planning and organizing sessions on Wednesday nights at the Bernal branch library. Its goals are to discover and preserve the elements that make our community unique: the physical, as in architectural history; the spiritual, as in natural history; and in the cultural, as in people's own stories.

The group is still welcoming members and resources — especially anyone with an interest in historical architectural resource surveys, and those

who can help with collecting oral histories from residents. They need volunteer interviewers and names of people who could be interviewed. They know that Bernal is a repository of valuable memories of everyone who has lived here for a while.

Bernal Heights Preservation is prospecting for nuggets of neighborhood history. Two examples: Bernal is the proud possessor of a building designed by John Galen Howard, the architect who did the buildings and campus at UC Berkeley; and what is the feminist connection with the much-remembered streetcar accident on Richland Avenue?

There is much more digging to be done, and anyone with enthusiasm is welcome to volunteer. BHP is looking forward to the next meeting on Wednesday April 21, and is anticipating the Bernal branch library's Neighborhood History Day on Saturday, June 5. For more information, call Gail Sansbury at 824-2659 or e-mail sansbury@worldnet.att.net.

— Palladio

Oral History: The second and third working meetings of the Oral History Section of the Bernal Heights Preservation group on March 3 and 17 were well attended. Subjects covered on March 3 included outreach, translation, interview format & technological issues, and a proposed interview guide. On March 17, various handouts were distributed and discussed. A detailed "mock" interview was conducted by Gail Sansbury to demonstrate.

One of the challenges facing the group is identifying potential candidates for these oral histories. Once the organizational challenges are satisfied, outreach and canvassing will be extended to the neighborhood center, local churches, and other potential sources. The group is especially interested in having these interviews reflect the rich ethnic diversity of Bernal Heights. More information about the group will be available at the Precita Valley Neighbors "Music in the Park" event on May 7.

Readers of the *New Bernal Journal* who are interested in participating or who know of potential interviewees are encouraged to call me at 643-8548.

— Sam Broyles

Natural History Walk: Bernal Heights Preservation presents the periodic non-annual native plant tour of the top of the hill in Bernal Heights Park. Our guide will be Roland Pitschel, longtime Hill guardian and cofounder of the Bernal Hilltop Native Grassland Restoration Project. He was preserving our hill years before the city even thought about natural areas.

Meet at 11 a.m. on Sunday, 11 April on the south side of the hill at the quarry gate to the road that goes uphill to the communications bunker. The walk will last for about two hours.

— Palladio

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Proposition H Passes, J Fails

Funding restored for schools, while a housing initiative fails – seen as a victory for grassroots neighborhood politics.

By Vicky Walker

Great Schools for a Great City

Bernal parents and education activists rejoiced last month when Proposition H was passed by a resounding 71% of San Francisco voters (123,103) on the March ballot.

Proposition H, known as the Great Schools for a Great City charter amendment, was written and sponsored by Supervisor Tom Ammiano and supported by the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Education. It was also endorsed by the BHNC Board.

Proposition H requires the city of San Francisco to create a public education fund for the next eleven

years, to be phased in starting next year. The money will be used to fund universal free preschool facilities for all four-year-olds; restore and maintain arts, music, and physical education programs; provide for essential school support staff such as nurses, librarians, and counsellors; and give teachers pay raises. These so-called "extras" have been dramatically cut back over the years; Prop. H restores these school programs using state money. The program also has inbuilt flexibility, in that the money can be cut back if a state budget deficit of \$100 million is forecast.

"Workforce" Housing Initiative

Proposition J, which aimed to cre-

ate "workforce housing communities" at below market rate, was soundly defeated by a 70% majority of voters. The proposition was opposed by the BHNC Board, the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, and several supervisors including Tom Ammiano, Matt Gonzalez, Sophie Maxwell, and Chris Daly. It was endorsed by the Examiner and the Chronicle despite being opposed by many tenant organizations and labor unions, who argued that it amounted to little more than an incentive to developers to build yet more luxury condominiums.

Prop. J, or the Incentives to Build Below-Market-Rate Housing/Workforce Housing Initiative, was sponsored by the

Chamber of Commerce and was designed to give incentives to developers to build lower-cost housing in the city. Supporters painted the initiative as a chance to create moderately priced housing for SF's workers, but voters clearly saw it as a plan to build more expensive condos that would be out of the reach of ordinary families. A lack of public hearings may have hampered the debate.

Despite the failure of Prop. J, it's to be hoped that it will live on in spirit. The Board of Supervisors is working on an affordable housing program, and winning concessions from big developers so they can get lower-priced units built in return for contracts.

Yes!

I want to help Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center continue to serve my community!

- ☐ \$15-49 Regular Membership
- ☐ \$250 Neighborhood Center Advocate
- ☐ \$50-99 Supporting Membership
- ☐ \$500 Neighborhood Center Sustainer
- ☐ \$100-249 Neighborhood Center Friend
- ☐ \$1000 Neighborhood Center Sponsor
- ☐ \$1.00 Youth Membership (under 18)
- ☐ \$5.00 Seniors/Low-income Membership
- ☐ \$_____ Other

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My employer has a matching gift program. A corporate matching form is enclosed.

Name of employer

- ☐ I am interested in learning about volunteer opportunities.
- ☐ I am interested in learning about Planned Giving opportunities.
- ☐ I have remembered the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center in my will.

Other Ways You Can Help!

- Make a United Way Donor Choice gift. Just fill in BHNC's code #928683 on the United Way pledge form.
- For federal workers, the Combined Federal Campaign is the program through which you designate your United Way gift.
- Multiply your gift with a matching contribution from your employer.
- Donate used items to our thrift store, Gifts on the Hill, 513 Cortland Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94110
- Donate resale items to Community Thrift Store, Valencia between 17th and 18th streets, and designate BHNC (acct# 243) as the beneficiary.
- When you shop at Cole Hardware, Mission and 29th Street, tell them you want BHNC (acct# 515) to get 10% from your purchase.
- Consider including the BHNC in your estate planning. Call 206-2140, ex.161, to discuss how.

New Bernal Journal En Español!

Abril/Mayo 2004

¡La campaña del 2004 para reclutar miembros sobrepasa los 1,300 miembros!

Por Jack Chalmers

La campaña del BHNC para reclutar miembros en el 2003 demostró el gran apoyo de la comunidad. Terminamos el año con 1,121 miembros, 38% más que los 810 miembros del año anterior, más del doble del número de hace tres años y 12% más que la meta de 1,000 miembros establecida para el año 2003.

Tenemos esperanzas altas para esta campaña de abril hasta junio. Nuestra meta es llegar a unos 1,300 miembros en diciembre, un aumento de 16% sobre el año anterior. El Departamento de Ancianos y el Departamento de Jóvenes están proveendo servicios a cada vez más personas que los necesitan. El Departamento de Organización Comunitaria sigue construyendo una comunidad sana a través de la movilización comunitaria alrededor de una visión colectiva. El Departamento de Viviendas empezó la construcción de 37 nuevos apartamentos para personas ancianas de bajos ingresos en el número 5199 de la Calle Misión. Pedimos a la comunidad unirse a nosotros y ayudarnos a continuar este trabajo en nuestro vecindario.

Como organización comunitaria sin fines de lucro, el BHNC representa a sus miembros. Además de ser una parte integral del ingreso de la organización, los miembros actúan como voluntarios para algunos eventos, votan por el Consejo (que también está formado por miembros), son clientes del Centro, y también proveen la voz de la comunidad con sus visitas, llamadas telefónicas y cartas para expresar si les gusta o no la dirección que está tomando la organización. Los miembros son realmente los que invierten en el BHNC y entienden el valor de sus servicios para la comunidad.

Además de guiar las acciones del Centro y hacer que uno se sienta bien porque está apoyando los servicios esenciales que provee la organización a las personas ancianas, los jóvenes y las personas de bajos ingresos en Bernal Heights y en las comunidades adyacentes, ser miembro incluye a las ventajas siguientes:

- Descuentos en el alquiler de espacio dentro del BHNC
- Descuentos en actividades para las personas ancianas, tal como el viaje a Reno, excursiones y eventos especiales
- Reconocimiento en el Informe Anual del BHNC y en el New Bernal Journal.

Para muchas personas que residen o trabajan en Bernal Heights, el privilegio más importante del que beneficia uno al ser miembro es poder votar en el Congreso Anual, que este año tendrá lugar el día sábado, 12 de junio. "En el

Congreso, los miembros nos guían y nos dan dirección," explica Ron Morgan, Organizador Comunitario del BHNC. El año pasado en el Congreso, se discutieron cuatro asuntos: el presupuesto de la Ciudad, Home Depot, el Proceso de Planificación de la Calle Misión al Sur de la César Chavez organizado por el BHNC, la planificación de la celebración del el veintyquinto aniversario de la organización y la del diezquinto Festival callejero de Bernal Heights, Fiesta on the Hill. Este año, los asuntos que se tratarán en el Congreso también serán muy variados. También se elegirán a nuevos miembros del Consejo de Directores, y se reclutarán a nuevos participantes para los comités.

Entonces ayúdenos a crecer. Hágase miembro ahora y sea la primera persona en su cuadra en hacerse miembro del Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center en el año 2004. Es su Centro ... es su casa.

Para renovar su estado de miembro, or para ser un nuevo miembro, ver la página 8.

El BHNC, la Red de Acción Para las Personas Ancianas (Senior Action Network) y el Consejo de los Supervisores unen sus fuerzas para restaurar la comida para los ancianos

Por Ron Morgan

El Consejo de los Supervisores votó 9-0 a favor de una resolución que pide al Concilio para la Oportunidad Económica de San Francisco (Economic Opportunity Council of San Francisco, EOC) restablecer inmediatamente los lugares de distribución del sistema de distribución de nutrición suplementaria para las personas ancianas de San Francisco.

El EOC, que administra el programa de nutrición suplementaria para las personas ancianas, mejor conocido como "comida en caja" ("box food"), disminuyó drásticamente y con muy poco aviso el número de lugares de distribución de 92 a 12, dejando a nuestros vecinos más frágiles y necesitados sin acceso a comida esencial. El BHNC, quien antes de los recortes al programa había distribuido más de 100 cajas de comida a personas ancianas, convocó una reunión con representantes del EOC en noviembre del año pasado. Los representantes dijeron a las más de 50 personas presentes, ancianos que reciben servicios del BHNC y residentes de los Coleridge Park Homes, uno de los lugares de distribución que quitaron del programa, que había poca probabilidad de que los lugares de distribución estuvieran restablecidos. Sin embargo los

representantes tenían pocas respuestas en cuanto al porqué se tomó esta decisión cortar un servicio tan vital.

Trás haber conectado con otros lugares de distribución de la Ciudad que fueron reecortados, el BHNC se hizo partenaireo con la Red de Acción para las Personas Ancianas y el Supervisor Chris Daley para escribir una resolución para restaurar todos los lugares de distribución de cajas de comida. Se debatió el asunto en una audiencia frente al Comité de Servicios de la Ciudad (City Services Committee) el día 26 de febrero. La sala estaba totalmente llena de personas ancianas y de gente que las apoya. El testimonio empezó no oficialmente cuando una anciana saltó de su silla y empezó a contar lo difícil que es llevar una caja de comida de 40 libras en MUNI, actuando su narración. Anuque habló en Mandarin, todos los que estaban presentes la entendieron muy claramente. Georgia Wilette, una señora anciana de Bernal Heights, y otros ancianos de Bernal que llegaron a la audiencia en el camión del BHNC, también dieron su testimonio.

El Comité de Servicios de la Ciudad pasó una resolución para restaurar los lugares de distribución después de varias horas de testimonio, y los Supervisores Peskin, Ma, Duffy, Alioto-Pier, Sandoval y Gonzalez firmaron la resolución como copatrocinadores. El Consejo pidió al EOC formar parte de un grupo de trabajo que incluye a la Oficina del Controlador, el BHNC, la Red de Acción para las Personas Ancianas y otras organizaciones comunitarias para crear un plan para restaurar las cajas y presentarlo al Consejo dentro de 60 días.

Diezyquinta donación anual de sangre de la iglesia St Kevin

Por Gerry Audet

Otra vez ha llegado el momento del año de dar sangre y a la misma vez sentir que está haciendo algo para la comunidad. Todos están invitados. La donación comunitaria de sangre tendrá lugar el domingo, 2 de mayo del 2004, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m. en el Centro Religioso de St Kevin en la esquina de las calles Jarboe y Anderson.

Les damos una especial bienvenida a los que dan sangre por primera vez. Sólo les tomará unos 30 minutos de su tiempo desde el principio hasta el final. Usted tendrá que llenar un breve formulario médico. Después se le dará donuts, uvas pasas, galletas y refrescos. La razón por la que se necesita beber muchos líquidos es porque después de donar sangre, su cuerpo vuelve a producir la pinta de sangre dentro de 24 horas.

Uno tiene que llevar una tarjeta de

identidad, pesar más de 110 libras y tener al menos 17 años. Los 35 hospitales de la Área de Bahía necesitan más de 450 unidades de sangre al día. ¡Siéntese bien! De sangre para que otros puedan vivir.

Un mensaje del Capitán Chignell

Saludos desde la Comisaría de Policía del Ingleside. A finales de febrero empecé como nuevo Capitán del Distrito de Policía del Ingleside. Esto ha sido una temporada muy ocupada durante la cual he estado aprendiendo mucho sobre el Distrito y participando en numerosas reuniones con líderes comunitarios.

En mi carrera de treinta y cuatro años en el Departamento de Policía de San Francisco, he trabajado en varias funciones y comisarías de policía. He trabajado de agente de patrulla, sargento, inspector, teniente y ahora capitán. Trabaje en las comisarías de policía del Taraval, Southern, Northern y del Tenderloin, así como en el Departamento de Narcóticos, el Palacio de Justicia y cuatro años en la Oficina del Alcalde con el antiguo Alcalde Art Agnos.

Además de mi trabajo con el Departamento de Policía, he sido Presidente de la Asociación de los Agentes de Policía de San Francisco, tuve un puesto en la Comisión sobre la Preservación y el Desarrollo, y soy Alcalde de la ciudad de San Anselmo.

Mis momentos más memorables en el Departamento de Policía han sido cuando trabajé en los vecindarios de San Francisco con organizaciones comunitarias. Mi tiempo favorito fue cuando era teniente en el Tenderloin. Nos enfrentábamos con muchos tipos de crímenes y teníamos que desarrollar estrategias para acabar con la prostitución en la calle, la distribución de drogas al aire libre y la violencia entre las maras. El Tenderloin es una comunidad admirable con un gran diversidad étnica, y muchos niños y personas ancianas. Las numerosas organizaciones comunitarias apoyaban fuertemente las estrategias de prevención al crimen que yo había adoptado.

El Distrito del Ingleside es una parte de la ciudad muy interesante. En las dos primeras semanas, conocí a muchas personas que quieren que este barrio sea un lugar seguro para vivir y trabajar, personas que aprecian la diversidad y que quieren ayudar a la gente necesitada.

Si Ustedes me quieren contactar, me pueden llamar al 404-4030 o mandarme un email a la dirección Paul_Chignell@sfc.ci.ca.us. Me alegraré tener la oportunidad de conocerles y colaborar con todos Ustedes en asuntos de la comunidad. ■

Volunteer List

A big thank you to everyone who kindly donated time and services this past year. We appreciate your help!

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Tamaya Garcia
Alice Gilbeaux
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Diana Grow
Chris Halkins
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James Inglis
Alison Jacks
Hanna Jenson
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Gail Johnson
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MYEEP Program

Fang Fang
Jenny Guan

Yanna Guan
Angelique He
Young Huynh
Ken Li
Georgina Mendoza
Julie Ngo
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Olivia Taylor Kelsey Jeter
Julio Ybarra

Tears of a Rose

Evangela Brewster
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Alexandria Souza
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United Playaz

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Sade Amor
James Bailey
San Quin and Quincey
Bailey
Dave Bardoni
Tierra Baylor
Lorenzo Bell
Marcus and Jamen
Boddie
Angel Brambila
Cynthia Brambila
Evangela Brewster
Mariah Caramat
Suaro Cervantes
Courtney Chin
William and Fred Corpuz
Vernell Critton
Stacy Cunningham
Chris Daly
Stan Devela
Edgar Espanol
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Tahmal Flemming
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Gabriel Padilla
Junious and Shantel Pool
Max Reyes
Christopher Rivera
Valeria Salazar
Rudy Samabria
Amber Sanchez
Ricilyn Sanchez
Marlon Scott
Sara Segura
Kelly Seguro
Melvin Sims and
Clarence Sims
Steve Solo
Alexandria Souza
William Streetter
Darlene Thomas
John Thomas
Saniko Togafau
Sofia Toupolu
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Christina Tuimabave
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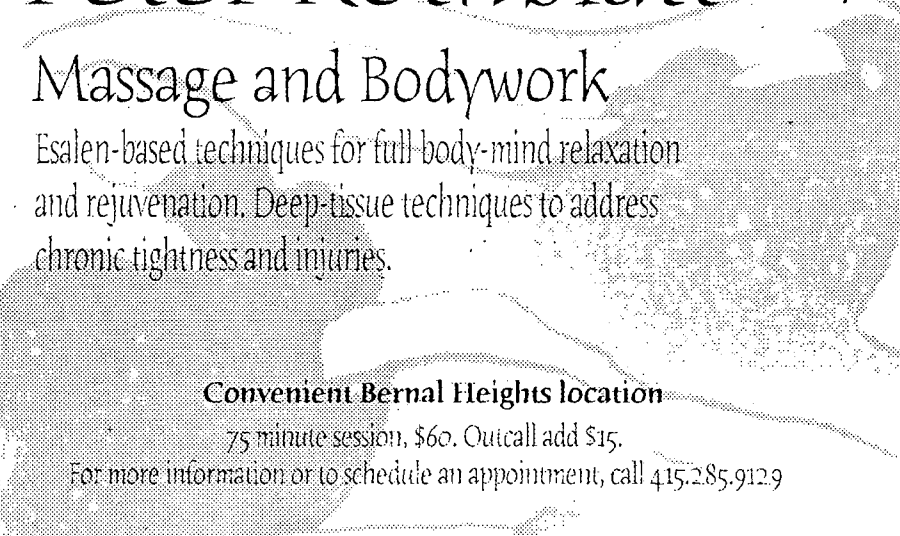
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Bernal Schools Update

Despite some gains, Bernal Heights and Excelsior schools are still struggling.

**By Kristen Atkinson,
Youth Services Director**

The recently released Academic Performance Index (API) shows mixed results for schools in the Bernal Heights and Excelsior neighborhoods. The API is a statewide measure of school success based on student performance on achievement tests. Schools are ranked on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest.

This year, two neighborhood schools made positive gains in their scores. Leonard Flynn Elementary received a statewide rank of 2, and ranked 5 when compared to 100 schools with similar demographics. Junipero Serra ranked 3 on the statewide comparison and 4 when compared to similar schools. Other schools that scored well include Guadalupe Elementary, James Denman Middle School, Leadership High School, and Longfellow and Sunnyside Elementary Schools. We congratulate and encourage them for their hard work and dedication to improving the quality of education for our children and youth. This year's gains will have a large impact on school resources: Serra will now face the loss of STAR funding, a SFUSD initiative that provides targeted interventions to improve student suc-

cess at underperforming schools.

It's clear that there is still much progress to be made. Schools like Balboa High School, Luther Burbank Middle School, and Paul Revere Elementary School continue to score low on the API. From agency experience, we know these schools are committed to improving the quality of education. Principals, teachers, and school administrators work hard to advocate for community and district resources that meet the needs of their students. Many work with community-based partners such as BHNC to provide in-school and after-school supportive services for struggling students.

BHNC currently provides Gang Prevention and Intervention services to Paul Revere, Luther Burbank, and Balboa. Case managers work within the schools and at community youth centers to assist high-risk youth in developing healthy goals, self-respect, and a strong sense of community. They act as advocates for youth by helping them acquire the resources to live healthy, safe lives, including jobs and job skills, mental and physical health care, legal advice and representation, and additional school services.

BHNC also runs Youth Leadership groups in each of these schools. At Paul Revere, youth learn life skills and engage in safe recreational activities through Jr. United Playaz. At Luther Burbank, students attend the Youth Awareness for Success group, where they learn conflict mediation, violence prevention, and

peer mentoring skills. At Balboa, students participate in United Playaz, a youth-led violence prevention group that uses art, music, drama, and peer education to promote community and positive alternatives to violence.

Together, schools and community-based services are making a real difference in the lives of children, youth, and families. However, current resources are not adequate to meet the vast needs of our students. Our community must pull together to advocate for resources to improve the quality of education for children and youth. Friends of Bernal Schools is promoting this vision, but they need our help. Parents and community members can get involved by attending school board meetings, making monetary donations to community programs, or volunteering at a neighborhood school. For more information, call Kristen Atkinson at 206-2140. To inquire about volunteer opportunities with the SFUSD, call 749-3700.

FAIRMOUNT ELEMENTARY

By Jan Goben

The Fairmount community invites all of its neighbors, near and far, to this year's FiestaVal, a party with music, food, dances, raffle prizes, and an auction. The school grounds at 65 Chenery (cross street Randall) will be filled with activities on the afternoon of May 15. Please join in the fun and celebrate the various cultures at

Fairmount, where Spanish immersion, English-language learners and special education are all part of our curriculum.

The auction and raffle include prizes such as tickets and backstage passes to a performance of *The Lion King*, tickets to the zoo and Discovery Museum, dinner at Chenery Park, shoes, jewelry, pajamas, and many other goodies donated by neighborhood merchants. Last year the event raised \$20,000 for the school; this year looks even more promising. For information, or to donate items, please call the school at 695-5669.

Fairmount's families and faculty have the wonderful chore of figuring out how to spend \$75,000 they received from a benefit performance of *The Lion King* in January. Carole Shorenstein Hays, the show's producer, chose Fairmount and four other schools to be beneficiaries. Fairmount will receive upwards of \$75,000, said Hydra Mendoza, a Fairmount parent and the executive director of San Francisco's Parents for Public Schools.

Fairmount teachers and families put together a wish list of items and programs they'd like to see funded from that money, said the school's Principal Karling Aguilera-Fort. He would like to see some of the funds go for literacy programs for all three strands of the school.

Read-a-thon: Students tallied up the minutes and pages that they read every day for two weeks in February and March

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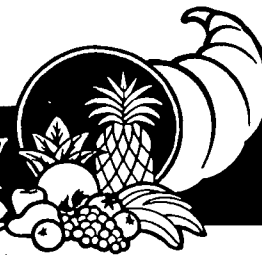
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for the school's read-a-thon, and gathered \$2,500. The money will help with the day-to-day operation of the library.

Operation Respect: Fairmount students performed at Lincoln High School in February before an audience of school district parents and employees who had gathered to hear songs by Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary, and Steve Seskin. Seskin sang his song "Don't Laugh at Me" while Fairmount fifth-graders followed along in sign language. The event promoted Operation Respect, a character education program.

FLYNN ELEMENTARY By Anne Colpitts

Since the New Year, Flynn has been busy with enrichment classes and family events. This year, all of our students are studying drumming and dance in preparation for taking part in San Francisco's Carnaval parade in May. Our after-school program has added knitting, cooking, and jewelry-making to its offerings this year, and the Bay Area SCORES program, which teaches soccer and writing skills, just started its spring season.

In January, we held our annual Math Night, where kids and parents play math games and learn together. With more than 150 people in attendance, it was a great opportunity for parents and kids to find out that math can be fun.

In February, Flynn celebrated Black History Month with an evening of student performances of songs, poetry, plays and dances. To celebrate Dr. Seuss's 100th birthday and Read Across America Day on March 2, Flynn sponsored community volunteers who read Dr. Seuss and other favorite children's books to classrooms. Flynn also held a "Storyteller and Games Night," where children snuggled into blankets and pillows on the floor to listen to the marvelous stories of Luisah Teish.

Flynn is still offering tours to families who have not yet chosen a school for next year, or who are looking ahead to 2005. Please come by to visit any Tuesday or Thursday at 9:00 a.m., or call 695-5770 to set up an appointment.

PAUL REVERE By Lisa Duba

There's no need to travel to the nearest Shakespeare Festival to get your dose of Elizabethan drama this year. Paul Revere fifth-grade students perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Thursday, May 20, at 7 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium.

Teacher Gina Rothman uses drama as a daily teaching tool for fifth-grade classes, including organizing special workshops with actors and local theater troupes. One such group, critically acclaimed physical theater company foolsFURY, taught group movement and stage combat to Paul Revere's aspiring actors. Last year, students used their new skills to choreograph their own stage fights in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, dazzling an audience of more than two hundred.

This year's production is gearing up to be just as good. "Our students are really motivated," Gina says. "They're really proud to be working on material that is normally assigned to high school students."

Drama is fun, but the educational benefits are clear. "Each year there are kids in our productions who struggle each day with grade-level reading," Gina says. "Learning Shakespeare actually helps these struggling readers while providing an extra challenge to high achievers."

Tickets are \$2 on the night or in advance at the school office at 555 Tompkins Ave. at Banks. Info: 695-5656.

JUNIPERO SERRA ELEMENTARY By Sue Saunders

Junipero Serra students have buddies who care about each other. Thanks to the success of a Caring Community Grant, teachers were trained to implement a buddy program that involves all of our K-5 students. Classes matched up and buddies were assigned to talk, draw, paint, read, write, do math, and even play outside games together. As part of the planning process, students try to predict problems they may face and brainstorm solutions. Teachers review goals for each buddy meeting and debrief after the session is over, when students talk about how they think the activity went and describe interactions with their buddies.

The older student buddies take pride in their ability to help the younger ones. Younger buddies feel welcome and safe in our school. Buddy time also gives all students a chance to get to know another teacher. All students and staff feel the sense of community that this program has put in place.

Another aspect of the Caring Community is Homeside activities, which differ from class to class and may be done as often as monthly or a few times a year. All students are given a task to complete with their parent or other adult. The activities are discussion starters that result in a student/adult writing. A favorite student activity is asking parents the story of how they were named. Parents have also enjoyed sharing the story about their hero.

Junipero Serra students are looking forward to the final inspection of our brand new playground structure. April should see the beginning of tons of fun on the new slide and climbing equipment.

Students and teachers are seeing amazing things this spring. We have fifteen microscopes on loan from Mission Science Workshop, and students are discussing, drawing, and asking questions about everything from rocks, plants, cheek cells, crystals, feathers, scales, and hair. Scientists from UCSF have come to a third-grade class and the After School Success Club to join in our investigations for a series of four sessions. Their support has come from the Science and Health Education Partnership.

Did you ever want to be "Principal for a Day?" In March, Kenneth McNeely of AT&T, our business partner, was principal for a morning at Junipero Serra. Students and staff welcomed him and also thanked him for the many hours AT&T employees have spent at our school reading aloud, being present at Literacy and Math Nights, volunteering in the classrooms, and donating office materials.

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED! Make your day and read with a child! Call Sue Saunders at 695-5685 or just come on over to 625 Holly Park Circle! ■



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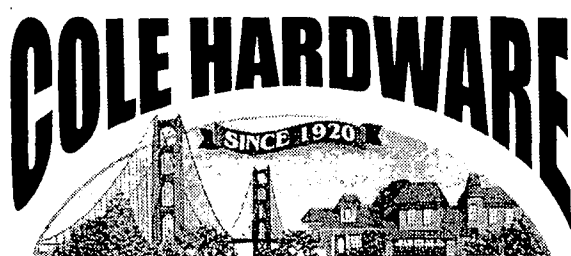
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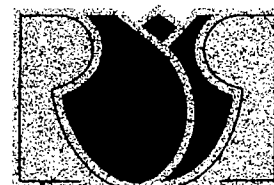
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Alan Bruce: This Progressive American Life

By Ron Morgan

Election season in San Francisco finds aspiring candidates and issue campaign managers focusing their attentions on Bernal Heights, which is consistently among the top San Francisco neighborhoods in voter turnout, especially progressive voter participation. There is an interesting phenomenon in SF politics; even though neighborhood demographics have changed dramatically in the last twenty years throughout the city, neighborhoods vote along the same ideological lines year after year. Political scientists speculate that this may be caused by something in the water, or the wainscoting. Perhaps it's because of the work of longtime neighbors who take the time to talk to new arrivals and initiate them into the political culture of their neighborhood.

In Bernal, Alan Bruce is one of these longtime neighbors. Every election cycle, he can be counted on to cover the precinct surrounding his Banks Street home, to talk to his neighbors, identify their positions on candidates and issues, and pass along educational materials and wisdom. It's exhausting work for a young person, but

he has been at it for seventy years. And election after election, Alan's precinct always comes through to support affordable housing, police accountability, local land use controls, support for our schools, and progressive candidates.

Alan Bruce's first memory as a community organizer is of riding his bike around his Berkeley neighborhood with a sign attached urging people to vote for Upton Sinclair for governor. He was ten. Alan recalls family dinner conversations relating the merits of Sinclair's End Poverty in California program, the candidacies of Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas, and other pioneer progressives. In 1944, as a college student in Chicago, he watched Franklin Delano Roosevelt deliver a campaign speech at a rally at Soldier Field.

After college, Alan moved back to the Bay Area, and became president of the Americans for Democratic Action, where he campaigned for Helen Gahagan Douglas against the dark prince of American politics, Richard Nixon, to become US Senator from California. During the '50s he worked alongside others who have become household names (in some case street names as well) such as



Alan Bruce and Ann Golden.

Phil and John Burton, Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, Alan Cranston, Jimmy Roosevelt, and William Coblentz. After a 1955 stint in the Philippines as an advisor on rural development, Alan settled down as county administrator in Marin throughout the '60s.

Alan moved to Bernal Heights in 1984 with his wife Ann Golden, and worked with the nascent BHNC on locally devised zoning and development controls. He served on the BHNC Board of Directors, and was a charter member of the Bernal Heights Democratic Club. If you live on Banks Street north of Cortland Avenue,

then Alan delivers your *NBJ*.

Today many pundits promote technology, whether TV-screen voting machines or Internet fund-raising, as the future of politics. Alan Bruce, quietly walking and talking with his neighbors and distributing materials made from dead trees, seems to be a relic from another age. But on election day the high-priced consultants and anxious candidates turn their attentions to the neighborhood precincts, where the slow and steady work of real people like Alan determines their future. ■

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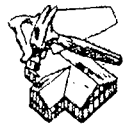
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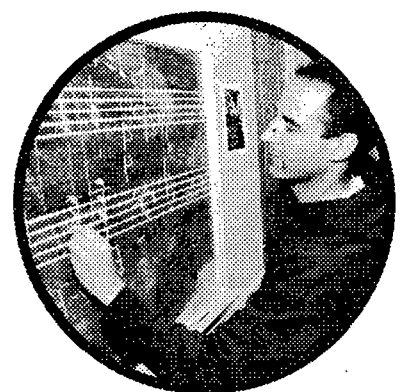
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EXCELSIOR HAPPENINGS

Excelsior shoppers tell us what they want to see on Mission Street, and two new specialty stores fit right in.

By Cristy Johnston

Mission Street in the Excelsior is home to a bustling, hardworking group of residents and merchants, making their way down from Silver to Geneva seeking a variety of items, traditional and exotic. From the botanica to the carniceria, Excelsior shops cater to the international shopper, offering traditional Mexican, Filipino, Chinese, and Vietnamese fare as well as a variety of other goods and supplies. You can find just about anything on Mission, or so we thought until we asked Excelsior shoppers what they thought was missing. Judging by their responses, there is some room to grow.

As part of the Excelsior Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (ENCoRe) project to revitalize Mission Street by filling in vacancies and making other physical improvements, Excelsior Action Group volunteers and ENCoRe staff recently surveyed scores of Excelsior residents, asking them what types of businesses and services they'd like to see on Mission Street. Volunteers asked residents to choose from a list of dozens of types of businesses and services and what was missing. The most popular responses from the fifty residents who completed surveys were a demand for more entertainment, more specialty stores, and more cultural events and gathering places. Volunteers will contin-

ue to door-knock and survey residents for the rest of March and the month of April. Call Cristy Johnston at 585-0110 to volunteer and/or for more details about the surveys and the project.

Many respondents are longtime Excelsior residents, happy to hear that an organization is actively working on Mission Street issues including public safety, cleanliness, filling vacant storefronts, and creating community via special events such as the Excelsior Festival and Halloween Safe R Treat. Longtime residents Mr. and Mrs. Chase, who have lived in the Excelsior for 51 years, said, "Anything you can do to get more services and more stores in this neighborhood can only be good for the community." Mr. Chase then went into detail about the many stores that used to be in the neighborhood, from the Granada Theater to the hardware stores and shoe repairs, painting a vivid picture of the Excelsior in the 1950s. Two new stores, however, bring us back to the present with in-demand specialty goods.

Reggae records and coffee

Now shoppers have two more specialty stores to browse with the opening of **Wisdom Records**, a reggae shop catering mostly to dancehall DJs and anybody who enjoys authentic Jamaican jams. Wisdom Records co-owners

Alexis Friedman and Javier Ibarra offer traditional Jamaican music and apparel. They are also longtime Excelsior residents who opened their store after growing tired of selling records from their living room. Check out their shop on Silver and Mission, where they spin the latest Jamaican hits, freshly imported for San Francisco's burgeoning dancehall reggae scene.

Cones n' Cakes/Mocha Chaca owner Alice Liu recently added an espresso bar and cafe to her specialty ice cream cake shop. Alice remodeled the former Baskin-Robbins into a warm, cozy destination, much frequented by area residents. Check out the original artwork by the Boys and Girls Club now being featured at the store.

Wisdom Records

4308 Mission Street (at Silver)
Tuesday-Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Sunday 1-7 p.m. Closed Monday
841-1258
www.wisdomrecordssf.com

Cones n' Cakes/Mocha Chaca

4482 Mission Street (at Excelsior)
7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7
a.m.-8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 8
a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday
584-7196, www.geocities.com/fanweiliu/ArtShow.html

BHNC Expands Public Safety Work in the Excelsior and South Bernal

By Anna Ulbrich

The BHNC recently received a mini-grant to work on public safety and violence prevention in the Alemany housing project in South Bernal and on Mission Street in the Excelsior from March 8 to June 30, 2004.

Four intersections will be the focus of the project: Excelsior and Mission, Onondaga and Mission, Persia and Mission, and Geneva and Mission. The BHNC would like to engage folks who live around or use Mission Street to get involved and help make it a safe and positive place.

The organization will hire four part-time outreach workers from the community: two Alemany residents and two Excelsior residents, one youth and one adult for each area. The thrust will be to engage Mission Street residents to attend the April 3 Town Hall, form a Public Safety Steering Committee, and participate in other outreach efforts and events.

For more information about how to get involved, please call Anna Ulbrich at 206-2140 ext. 152.



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Obituary — Odis Dodson

July 7, 1914-March 21, 2004

Odis Dodson was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, to Pearl and George Dodson. He was the oldest of eight children. Odis had four brothers; Robert and George (who preceded him in death), Walter, and Earl Dodson, and three sisters; Edna Williams, Dorothy Harris, and Aileen Fuller.

Odis was educated in Alexandria. In 1945 he joined the Merchant Marines and became a cook. There he developed his love for cooking. Upon leaving the service he came to California to stay with his mother, who had moved here earlier. Odis later met and married the love of his life, Eulelia Warren-Bryant, who had two children, Paulette Leila and James Henry Bryant. From this union came Odis Lee and Doreen Denise which made his family very complete.

For several years Odis worked as a longshoreman in San Francisco, and in 1950 he began working in various shoe repair shops. Eventually he started his own shoe and repair concession at the Saint Francis Hotel, which he operated until 1987 when he retired.

Odis was a very friendly and outgoing person. He was active in his community and help bring change to the Bernal Heights community where he resided for forty-five years. Odis knew everyone, all the young children and adults in his neighborhood often sharing his years of wisdom. He would often cut the neighbors' hair, causing them to sometimes run out of the house fearing for their lives or at least for their appearance.

Odis believed in God, and often called Jones Memorial United Methodist Church, where his wife and



children are members, his church. Odis will always be remembered for his witty sense of humor, his love of flowers and gardening, and his great cooking and hosting of family gatherings.

Odis is survived by his wife Eulelia Pearl Dodson, his four children Paulette Lelia Vann (John), James Henry Bryant (Ina), Odis Lee Dodson, and Doreen Denise Dodson-Covos (Roman); sisters Edna Williams, Dorothy Harris, and Aileen Fuller; brothers Earl and Walter Dodson; sister-in-law Linda Dodson; grandchildren Loren Jason Vann, Jennifer Aimee Portlock (Vann), James Christopher Bryant, Lee-Anthony Covos, and Paul Jonathan Bryant; and one great-grandchild, Abrea Lelia Portlock. And a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and very special friends.

Odis will forever be missed. He will always be in our hearts and minds. ■

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More Bernal Happenings

St. Kevin's Fifteenth Annual Community Blood Drive

By Gerry Audet

There are 35 hospitals in the Bay Area, and they need more than 450 units of blood every day. Why not feel good and do something for your community by donating some of yours? More than eight million people donate blood every year in the United States — and you could be helping to save a life.

The community blood drive will be held on Sunday, May 2, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Kevin's Religious Center at the corner of Jarboe and Anderson streets. Everybody is welcome to give blood, and first-time givers are especially welcome.

Giving blood takes only about thirty minutes. First, you'll need to fill out a short medical form to ensure you are physically well enough to donate. Then you will donate a pint of blood, which is painless and usually takes about ten minutes. Afterward you will be given small snacks such as doughnuts, raisins, and cookies, and light liquid refreshments. Make sure you drink plenty of liquids after donating so that your body replenishes the donated pint of blood within 24 hours.

Please bring a photo ID. You must weigh more than 110 pounds and be at least seventeen years old. Certain medical restrictions apply: visit www.aabb.org for further details. ■

A Day of Stairway Walks

By Mike Gale

On May 22, the City of San Francisco will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Adah Bakalinsky's book *Stairway Walks in San Francisco*. Beginning at 1 p.m., simultaneous walks will be held at six stairways throughout the city, including the ones in Bernal Heights East. Participants will receive a walk map and description from Adah's book, and will be led by a City Guide volunteer guide.

Beginning at the corner of Peralta and Esmeralda at 1 p.m., the walk weaves its way through the stairways at Mayflower, Joy, Faith, Rutledge, Brewster, Franconia, and Peralta, including public and private gardens as well as interesting highlights and anecdotes that make Bernal Heights one of the most interesting neighborhoods in the city. For more information on the Bernal Heights walk, contact Mike Gale at 505-6440, or e-mail mike@mikegale.net.

Wilderness Press, San Francisco Beautiful, and San Francisco City Guides will be hosting the day. For information on participating in one of the other stairway day walks, call City Guides at 557-4266, or e-mail stairways@sfcityguides.org.

Stairway Walks in San Francisco has 27 walks throughout the city, including turn-by-turn directions, maps, and historical information. To order the book, call 510-558-1666, ext. 105, or visit www.wildernesspress.com. ■

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United Playaz Visit San Quentin for a Multicultural Concert to Celebrate Black History Month



(Left) San Quentin Trust Fellow Program members get together with United Playaz for Black History Month.
(Below) Saniko dances Polynesian-style for the crowd.

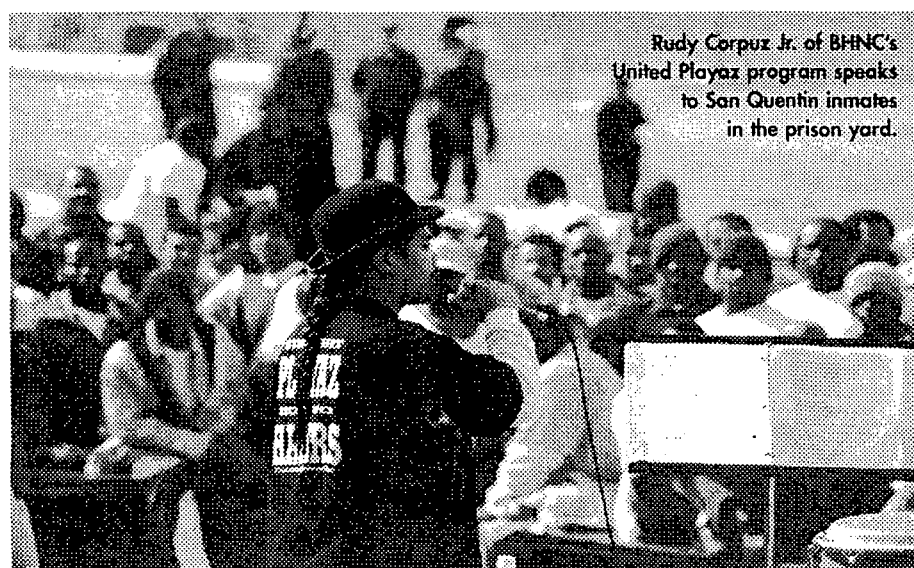


By Kristen Atkinson

Community activists, including BHNC's own gang prevention staffer Rudy Corpuz Jr., organized San Quentin Penitentiary's first ever "Black History Month Multicultural Concert" on February 28.

The event brought local performers into San Quentin for an afternoon of celebration and cultural appreciation. Sponsored by the Trust Fellow Program, the concert raised awareness of cultural diversity and provided the community an opportunity to give to those in need. Performers included Jenro and Gambizi, Huey MC, San Quin and Young Bailey, Aztec and Polynesian dancers, Fat Rat Entertainment, and many others.

The Trust Fellow Program is a group of inmates who are confined to life in prison and who seek to support other inmates as they begin to transition back into their own communities.



Rudy Corpuz Jr. of BHNC's United Playaz program speaks to San Quentin inmates in the prison yard.

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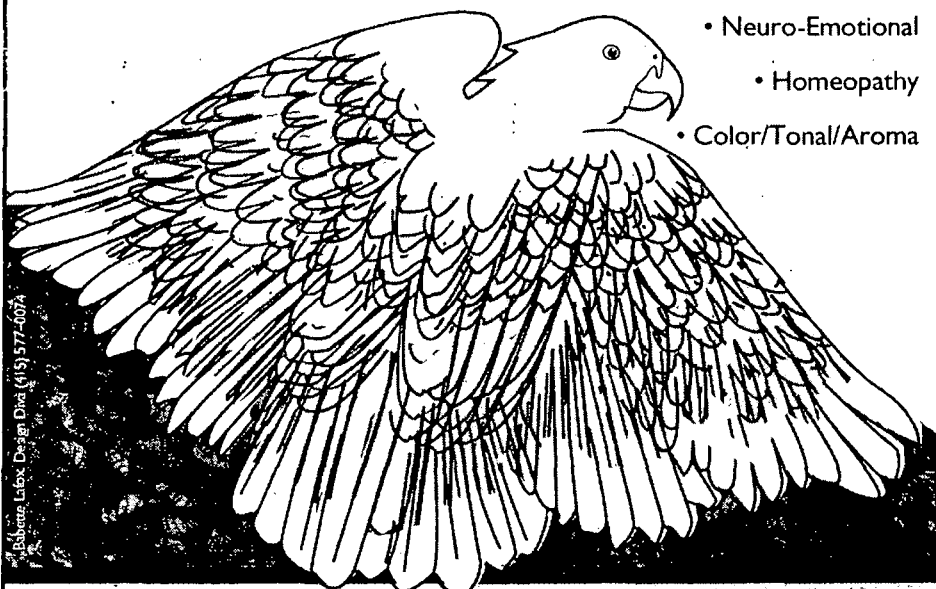
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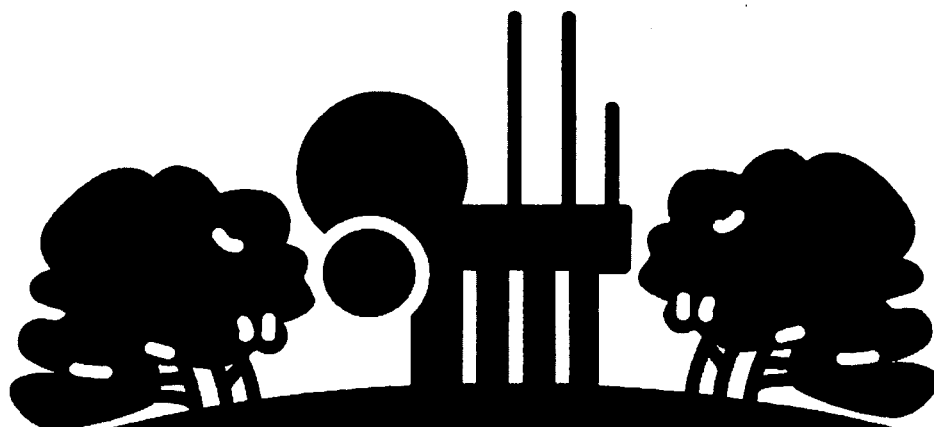
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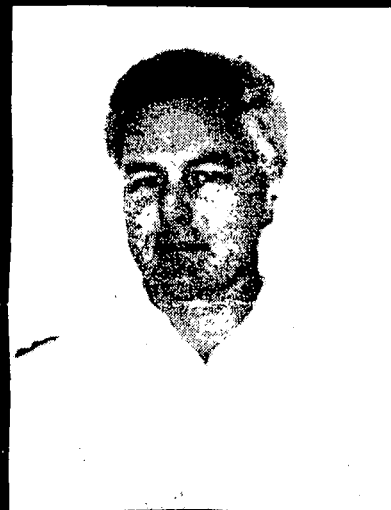
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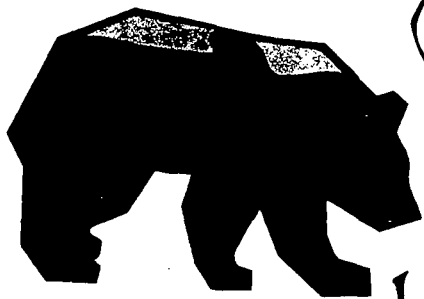
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